



## International Briefs *for* Higher Education Leaders

**H**igher education leaders today recognize the urgency of developing an international strategy for their institutions but often lack the knowledge and perspective needed to inform good decisions. Students are graduating into an increasingly integrated international environment that, while offering exciting opportunities, also presents many challenges. Institutions must create educational environments where students will begin to appreciate the complexity of global integration but also develop skills to navigate it successfully. Faculty are seeking opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in other countries to develop globally attuned academic programs and to expand research networks and collaborative projects. International outreach and initiatives enrich institutional culture but must be based on good information and analysis.

This new series reflects a strategic collaboration between the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) at Boston College to address these issues. Two publications per year will feature articles written by leading scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. Subscribers to the series will have access to some of the *Brief's* authors through ACE sponsored webinars. This will provide an opportunity to further explore critical topics presented in the *Brief*.

The *Brief-Webinar* series is designed to help senior leaders position their institutions for new opportunities and challenges in a rapidly changing global context.

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### **CHINA—Emerging Opportunities and Challenges for Higher Education Cooperation**

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## Introduction

The American Council on Education is pleased to launch, in cooperation with the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, the *International Briefs for Higher Education Leaders Series*. This new initiative provides policy-relevant analysis of international issues to its members in a dynamic new format. The series is in response to the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Global Engagement that recommended ACE should serve as a hub of information on global trends and international higher education. The recommendation was part of a wider analysis that focused on the rapid changes taking place in the global higher education landscape and the need for leaders to have reliable and timely resources to inform institutional strategies for global engagement.

Just as its member institutions face the need to respond effectively to a changing environment for higher education, ACE is responding and updating its programs and services. Its newly formed Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement will continue ACE's hallmark programs and research on comprehensive internationalization. It is also developing new programs that are responsive to the principal recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel in the following areas:

- *Lead on critical global higher education issues*
- *Assume a broader advocacy role*
- *Conduct, gather, and disseminate research and analysis*
- *Provide constituent services in the global arena*
- *Deepen international ties and outreach*

The *International Briefs Series* is a new component of ACE's global initiatives. It will feature a collection of short articles, combined with relevant statistics. The *Briefs* will offer differing perspectives about a specific country or a significant international higher education issue. The purpose of the series is to provide information for productive policy and strategic decision discussions on campus. The publication (delivered electronically) will be combined with a webinar made available to the campus community and feature authors of the current issue, who will make brief presentations to facilitate direct dialogue for a specific issue or theme.

Given the tremendous interest in higher education in China and the growing number of partnerships there with US institutions, it is fitting that our first issue focuses on China. It is the source of the largest numbers of international students in US colleges and universities. We are excited about bringing more information about China's complex higher education system to you and the challenges and opportunities that China's internationalization strategy presents.



—Patti McGill Peterson

## Contributors



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## The World of Universities in Modern China

**William C. Kirby**

While home to an ancient civilization with a long tradition of education, China is also a new country, founded exactly a century ago. In the first half of the 20th century, China developed one of the more dynamic systems of higher education in the world—with strong, state-run institutions (Peking University, Jiao Tong University, National Central University, and at the apogee of research, the Academia Sinica), accompanied by a creative set of private colleges and universities (Tsinghua College, St. John's University, Peking Union Medical College, and Yenching University, on whose campus the current Peking University now sits). All these institutions would be swept away in the late 1950s and 1960s. But the traditions and memories of excellence remained, and they have helped to fuel the recent, extraordinary growth, in size and quality, of Chinese universities. In higher education, as in other realms, Chinese governments have followed international models. This has led to extraordinary opportunities and challenges for international universities in China.

### The Historical Background

The serious role of foreign universities in China, today, is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it is a permanent feature of modern China's educational landscape. China's oldest modern university, Wuhan University, was founded in 1893 as a "Self-Strengthening Institute," with European advice. Before 1949, China's state universities were created largely on German models, while many of the leading private colleges were supported and advised by American institutions. In the 1950s, all Chinese universities were reorganized on Soviet patterns. Since 1978, and especially since 1998, Chinese higher education has introduced widespread experimentation, much

of it in the context of new international partnerships. For a century, China has presented an ambition to create "world-class" institutions of higher education. Today, many Chinese educational policymakers believe that the American system of higher education is in a position of global leadership, and they seek to learn from that system.

### Opportunities of the System

After the disasters of early Communist Party rule, Chinese universities reopened in 1977/78. They grew moderately for the next two decades. Since the late 1990s, however, China has witnessed unparalleled growth in the scope, diversity, and quality of higher education. A system that educated perhaps 2 million students in 1990 now enrolls more than 30 million. Private universities (*minban xueyuan*) account for perhaps 15 percent of enrollments. Sino-foreign universities (e.g., the University of Nottingham, Ningbo) have brought higher education and research centers to cities, outside the plans of the Ministry of Education. Many public universities have established "independent" universities that operate as full-time extension schools and generate significant revenue. In short, this is a time of great expansion, outreach, and experimentation in Chinese higher education. These developments in China have promoted cooperation and competition across the realm of "Greater China": Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore are all competing with Beijing and Shanghai, to be the educational leader of the Chinese-speaking world.

Opportunities for foreign universities in contemporary China exist everywhere, but perhaps especially in three realms. First, Chinese higher education has been so overcentralized in Beijing that other cities and regions are now highly entrepreneurial in recruiting international partners. Second, almost all leading Chinese universities are now developing American-style programs of "general education" and promoting curricula devoted to "liberal learning." Sometimes this takes place in new institutions (e.g., Fudan College, as

the liberal arts college in Fudan University); sometimes it is embedded in distribution requirements. Either way, it is a sign that pace-setting Chinese universities believe that China's next generation of leaders should be broadly educated in the humanities and social sciences, as well as in the sciences. This is an enormous change, but it has not diminished support for scientific research and the university rankings based on them. For, third, the Chinese government has committed to stunning levels of investment in scientific research and to international partnerships—in the physical, engineering, and life sciences.

*Nearly every leading American university believes that it needs to have a “China strategy” and somehow be involved in the rapid growth of higher education in China.*

What does this mean for American universities? Nearly every leading American university believes that it needs to have a “China strategy” and somehow be involved in the rapid growth of higher education in China. This has given rise to a healthy set of experiments and alternative models of engagement. Columbia and Chicago have opened an office and a center, respectively, in Beijing; Stanford is building a small campus within the campus of Peking University; New York University is establishing New York University-Shanghai as a “vertical university” (that is, in a high-rise), as part of its global network; the Harvard Center Shanghai promotes research, student internships, conferences, and executive education in China; and Duke University's 200-acre campus under construction in Kunshan, outside Shanghai, is the most ambitious international educational enterprise in China, since the days of Yenching University.

### Risks

Of course there are problems in this engagement, many of which come from international actors. Faculty or fund-raisers may suppose they must work in China on terms that differ those at the home campus. Thus, an easy rule (for universities, as well as businesses) presents this: do not do anything important in China that would violate the principles on which you operate in the United States. The reputational risks in China are commensurate with the opportunities. Because leading American universities are so admired, their mistakes

may be exaggerated, less by the official media than by the increasingly powerful blogosphere. At the end of the day, adherence to the values that have made international institutions admired in the first place is surely the best strategy.

A larger risk in China is whether it is possible to support the ideals of a liberal education in the arts, sciences, and professions, in a country that remains an illiberal political system. Yet, many Chinese university presidents, party secretaries, faculty, and students deeply value their international partnerships and seek greater institutional autonomy. Local and regional officials have large incentives to cooperate with international universities and are in a position to make major commitments.

The Chinese political system remains restrictive, while it has allowed, indeed enabled, universities to grow and flourish. If historical examples are useful, 19th-century Germany may be a model: world-class universities in an illiberal polity. Chinese universities do not yet have the comparative autonomy of their earlier German counterparts. However, the greatest risk for international universities may perhaps be if they are not involved, in some significant way, with the fastest-growing system—in quality as well as quantity—of higher education in the world. For China, as for the rest of the world, the history of modern higher education is one of inescapable internationalization and partnership.

## Chinese Higher Education: Statistics and Trends

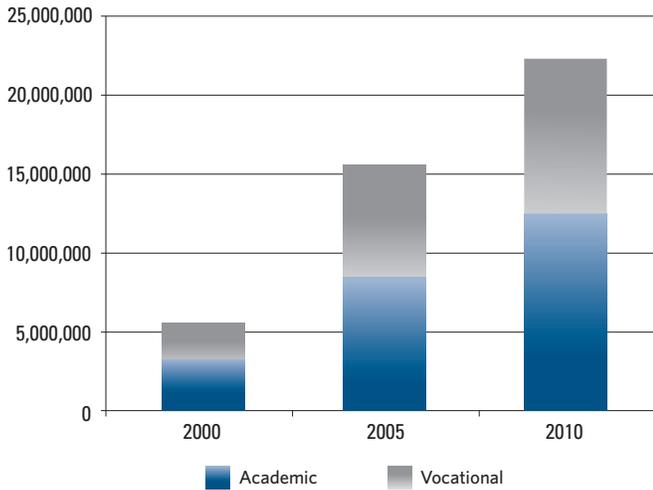
David A. Stanfield and Yukiko Shimmi

China's system of higher education has experienced significant growth over the past two decades. Increased student enrollment, faculty hiring, newly established institutions of higher education, and transnational education initiatives are indications of the changing nature of higher education in China. Despite a period of sustained growth, recent figures indicate a decline on the horizon. The following analysis offers a brief summary of higher education statistics and highlights key trends.

### Students

Undergraduate student enrollment doubled during the 1990s, from 2.1 million to 4.1 million. In the new millennium, enrollment grew at an even faster rate, bringing the total undergraduate population to a staggering 22.3 million by 2010 (see figure 1, p. 6). Graduate enrollment grew at an even faster rate, from 283,000 in 2000 to over 1.5 million only 10 years later.

Figure 1: Undergraduate Enrollment

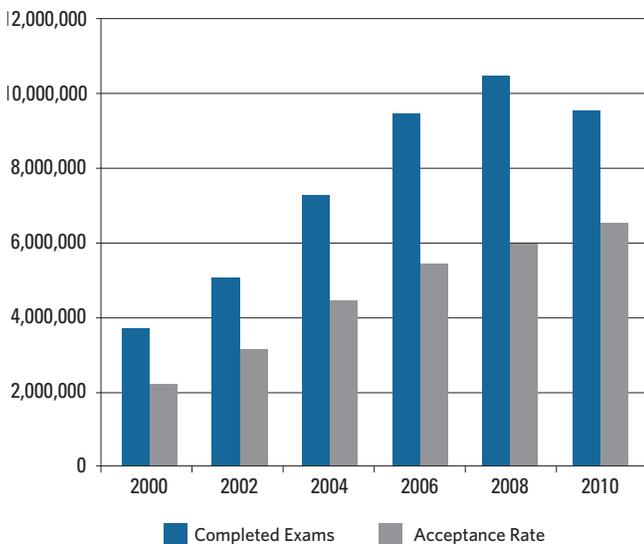


Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China 2001, 2006, 2011a, and 2011b.

Furthermore, the percentage of China's relevant-aged population enrolled in college increased dramatically during these two decades. In 1991, the college participation rate or gross enrollment ratio was only 3 percent, increasing to 24 percent by 2009 (UNESCO 2011).

Student demographic data indicate China has achieved gender parity in undergraduate and master's degree enrollment, while the percentage of women in doctoral programs is only 35 percent. In 2010, the three most popular undergraduate majors were engineering, management, and literature, respectively. Eighty percent of students studying literature specialized in foreign languages or art.

Figure 2: National Higher Education Entrance Exam (Gaokao)



Source: People's Daily Online 2010; Chronicle of Higher Education 2010.

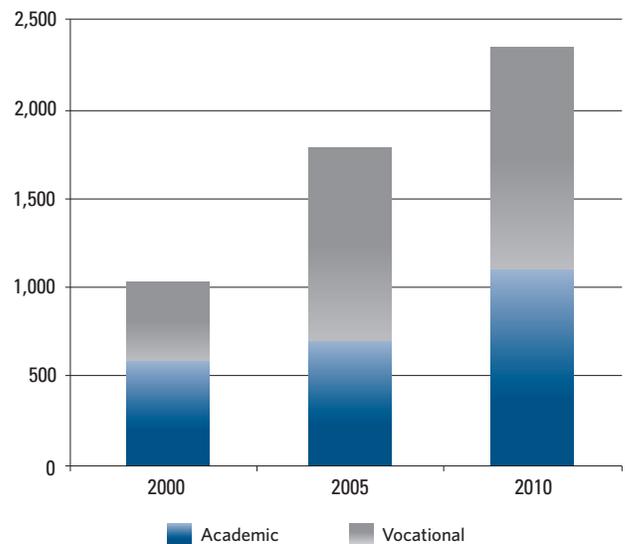
Though undergraduate student enrollment continues to increase, the annual growth rate has declined steadily from 2006 to 2010 from 11 percent to 4 percent, and data suggest the enrollment rate will continue to decline. From 2009 to 2011, the number of students completing the annual National Higher Education Entrance Examination, commonly referred to as the *gaokao*, declined leading to record high acceptance rates (see figure 2). The media offered a variety of explanations including fewer high school graduates, a depressed job market, and more undergraduate students studying abroad.

### Institutions and the Academic Profession

The increased demand for higher education led to the establishment of a number of new postsecondary institutions. In 2000, China had 1,041 colleges and universities, and that number more than doubled to 2,358 by 2010 (see figure 3). The number of institutions controlled by the central government, typically the most prestigious universities, remained constant from 2004–2009 at 111, while the number of provincial or locally controlled universities increased slightly from 1,394 to 1,538. The most significant increase occurred in the private sector, often perceived as the lowest rung in Chinese institutional hierarchy, which grew from 226 in 2004 to 656 in 2009. With a slowing enrollment growth rate, many private institutions will likely struggle to attract students in coming years.

Similar to the United States, China has traditional academic bachelor's-level institutions and vocational or junior colleges. In 2000, China had 599 academic institutions and 474 vocational colleges, and by 2010 the number of academic in-

Figure 3: Postsecondary Institutions



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China 2001, 2006, 2011a, and 2011b.

stitutions grew to 1,112 and 1,246 vocational colleges. Of the 22.3 million undergraduate students enrolled in 2010, 12.6 million attended traditional academic institutions and 9.7 million enrolled at vocational colleges.

To keep pace with increasing demand, Chinese colleges and universities hired 869,000 new full-time faculty between 1999 and 2009. The 2009 data indicate full-time faculty in China are near gender parity (46% women). However, only 13 percent of China's faculty hold a PhD, while 33 percent earned a master's degree, leaving over half of full-time faculty teaching with only a bachelor's degree. The shortage of faculty with advanced degrees represents a significant challenge for Chinese higher education. However, thus far, China has avoided the troubling global trend of hiring a larger proportion of part-time faculty—only 20 percent out of 1.6 million total faculty are classified as part time.

### International Students and Cross-Border Education

Just as Chinese higher education has grown over the past decade, the number of international students studying at Chinese institutions has also increased. In 2009, China hosted 117,548 international students primarily from other Asian countries, followed by Europe, Africa, and North America. The number of Chinese students seeking higher education abroad has also witnessed a notable increase in recent years, with more than 500,000 reported studying outside of China in 2009 (UNESCO 2011). The number of Chinese students studying in the United States over the last 10 years increased from 60,000 to almost 160,000, despite 5 years of stagnant growth following 9/11 (Institute of International Education 2011). Currently, large numbers of Chinese students are also studying in Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Korea (UNESCO 2011). Over half of the Chinese students studying abroad are pursuing advanced degrees. The return rate (students returning to their home country, divided by students leaving to study abroad) of Chinese graduate students from 2001 to 2010 increased from 13.4 percent to 47.3 percent, indicating that a rising number are returning to China after graduation. However, additional data paint a more-complicated picture. In 2010, 82 percent of Chinese doctoral recipients (including students from Hong Kong) studying in the United States reported an intention to stay in the United States after graduation (National Science Foundation 2011).

Cross-border higher education initiatives have expanded rapidly in recent years. Currently, 18 international branch campuses operate in China, with host institutions primarily from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom (C-

BERT 2011; Lawton and Katsomitros 2012). Branch campuses are required to collaborate with a local Chinese university and offer dual degrees. Seven additional institutions, all from the United States and United Kingdom are in the process of setting up branch campuses or have expressed intentions to open a campus in the next few years. In addition to branch campuses, a substantial number of joint-partnership programs exist in China. Over 600 undergraduate and graduate joint-partnership programs are approved by China's Ministry of Education. The government has expressed concerns over the quality of such partnerships and has vowed to intervene when standards are not met.

*Authors' note:* Unless otherwise noted, all statistics are retrieved from the 1999–2010 Web sites of the National Bureau of Statistics of China (<http://www.stats.gov.cn>) and the Ministry of Education, *Higher education statistics* (<http://www.moe.edu.cn>)—(accessed January 17, 2012).

*(Additional references on p. 23)*

## Chinese Challenges: Toward a Mature Academic System

Philip G. Altbach

Cross-border academic engagement is never an easy process. Cultural, administrative, curricular, and often political differences must be understood—and effectively considered in any successful collaboration. This article focuses on the complexities and some of the challenges of an expanding and developing Chinese academic system. To paraphrase Mao Zedong, the academic system is the ocean in which all academic collaboration swims.

### Unprecedented Expansion

China's academic expansion in the past several decades has been unprecedented. In 1978, only 1.5 percent of the age cohort attended higher education. By 2010, the proportion had increased to 27 percent and is estimated to expand to 36 percent by 2015. China's higher education system is now the largest in the world, with more than 31 million students enrolled, the majority of whom attend tertiary nonuniversity institutions. The growth of a new private higher education sector has also been unprecedented. There are now more than 800 "nonstate" (private) higher education institutions, enrolling more than 4 million students.

This expansion, while extraordinarily impressive, has created some problems. Dramatic growth, combined with diffuse re-

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sponsibility for higher education among ministries at the national, provincial, and municipal levels and now shared with the private sector, has created considerable confusion about goals, mission, and funding. While there have been efforts to create a differentiated academic system that identifies specific missions for institutions, considerable confusion remains. Further, a wave of institutional mergers and combinations, undertaken to create more comprehensive universities and improve quality, has yielded mixed success.

China has been most successful in building its research university sector—by injecting massive resources through the 985 Project. These government-funded initiatives identified about 40 universities throughout the country and provided funding and other support to enable some of them to build world-class facilities and recruit the best professors and students. Perhaps a dozen of these universities are likely to compete with the best institutions worldwide, for talent and prestige. An additional initiative, the 211 Project, provided supplementary funds to an additional 120 universities.

It is, however, fair to say that much of the rest of the system is without direction and often starved for resources. Most universities strive toward a research mission, even if they lack the appropriate staff or financial resources. Many universities borrowed heavily from state-run banks, to build their campuses, and face unsustainable debts that cannot be repaid. The quality of many institutions toward the bottom of the Chinese academic hierarchy is questionable, and graduates of these institutions are finding it hard to obtain a job.

Much of the new private sector is problematical. Only a small minority of the *min ban* (people run) nonstate postsecondary institutions is authorized by the Ministry of Education to award academic degrees. Others provide certificates of various kinds. Quality varies tremendously, and many institutions are simply trade schools focusing on specific vocational fields, while most are for-profit.

### The Future of Expansion

China faces an uncommon problem. On the one hand, enrollment will significantly rise in the coming decades, as China fulfills its goal of educating 40 percent of the age cohort by

2020. It is estimated that 36 million students will study in postsecondary institutions, which will require continued expansion. At the same time, China's demographic profile is changing. For example, the population of 18-22-year-olds peaked in 2008 at 125 million, but will decline to 88 million by 2020. Postsecondary enrollments will continue to increase, because of the expansion of access. However, the rapid building of facilities that characterized the past few decades will no doubt decrease.

Currently, the access bottleneck seems to be at the top universities, where competition for entry is fierce, and all of the well-qualified students cannot be accommodated. Thus, a growing number of the brightest Chinese students, who might otherwise remain in China if seats at top institutions were available, are going abroad for undergraduate study. Those who have lower scores on the *gaokao* (national entrance examination) may find it easier to attend a university—but harder to locate employment upon graduation.

### The Academic Profession

Professors are the core of any university. The Chinese academic profession faces significant problems. One-third of academic staff nationally hold only a bachelor's degree—the proportion increases to 60 percent in the new private sector. At the top universities, at least 70 percent of the faculty has earned a doctorate. Academic salaries are low—with the exception of a small percentage of highly productive academics at top universities. Chinese academics do not earn enough to live a middle-class style and must moonlight—that is, accept additional teaching responsibilities on campus or, otherwise, find additional income. In a recent study of academic remuneration in 28 countries, China scored lowest when measured by purchasing power parity measures. There is also a good deal of inbreeding in faculty hiring and a considerable use of *guanxi* (personal connections and networks), as well.

### Governance

Chinese universities are highly bureaucratic, and the concept of shared governance is limited. Senior professors seem to dominate internal decision making. Senior administrators are for the most part appointed by top management but usually with input from relevant departments or schools. The dual management system constitutes a president, with the main responsibility for academic affairs, and a party secretary

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(now often called the chairman of council), with control over budget, ideology, internal management, and promotions. The party secretary is appointed by provincial or national authorities. Top Chinese universities are moving slowly toward shared governance arrangements more familiar in the West.

### Building an Academic Culture

Effective universities need a vibrant academic culture. Most Chinese universities are still developing such a culture, although the top universities are making significant progress. The elements of an effective academic culture, generally taken for granted in the developed world, remain a challenge in many other parts of the world. Indeed, for China to develop truly world-class universities, the development of key elements of academic culture is required. Otherwise, a kind of glass ceiling is likely to be reached.

Some of the central elements involve a full commitment to academic freedom—so that scholars and scientists are free to publish and communicate as they wish, particularly in areas of their academic specialty. Unfettered access to information via the Internet as well as in books and journals is also a requirement. The university in all of its functions must be both meritocratic and reasonably transparent. This means that personal, political, and institutional connections must not influence decisions regarding personnel, research, or other academic matters. The academic environment must be free of plagiarism, cheating on examinations, and other elements of corruption. All of these issues remain problematic in many sectors of Chinese academe. Efforts are being made to curb such practices, but they remain ingrained in the system.

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### Conclusion

Universities and academic systems worldwide face an array of 21st century challenges. China's higher education institutions are not exempt to contemporary turmoil. As an expanding postsecondary system still in the process of building both enrollment capacity and academic quality, China's challenges are different from those facing the developed world. Yet, problems exist, and foreign institutions seeking to

engage with China's expanding academic system must fully understand these realities, when considering possibilities for engagement.

## China's Elite Sector and National Projects

Wang Qi

Socioeconomic transformation and growth in China have led to unprecedented changes in higher education, in the last three decades. National initiatives to enhance leading universities' capacity and competitiveness include the 211 and 985 Projects. The history of such initiatives can, however, be traced back to the early 1950s, when the Ministry of Education recognized six universities as the "key universities." Since then, a system of key universities has been formed and developed, which has greatly influenced and shaped higher education structure and reform in China.

### Identifying "Key Universities" (1950s to 1960s)

Soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government realized the significant role of higher education in nation building. Based on the Russian experience, the government issued the Decision on Key Universities and Terms of Reference. This program stipulated that the main responsibilities of key universities were to train a high-quality workforce and to develop a high-quality teaching force. Six universities were selected and recognized as the key universities for concentrated development. From the late 1950s to the 1960s, three further groups of universities were awarded a key university status by the government.

This stage was initiated and supported by the government, in response to national socioeconomic needs. Key university status was awarded by the government, but the criteria were not clear. Furthermore, instead of providing substantial funding support, the relevant policies and regulations only emphasized the role of teaching and training for the workforce, with no follow-up evaluation of these selected universities' performance.

### Resuming Key Universities" (1970s to 1980s)

These policies and initiatives were disrupted during the Cultural Revolution and resumed in 1978, when the Report on the National Key Universities Recommencement and Development was issued by the State Council. The report emphasized the role of national key universities as "the centers of teaching and research in higher education" and solving the

key scientific problems regarding modernization. It reiterated that these model universities would lead higher education reform in China.

Since then, the system of key universities has been institutionalized. The number of key universities increased from 64 in 1963 to 97 in the late 1970s. In 1980, key universities were the first in the nation to offer graduate-degree programs. Attention has also been given to both basic and applied research in these universities. Regulated in policy documents, research funding was invested in key universities and research centers. Governance reform was also introduced in the key universities—in terms of leadership, teaching resource allocation, and student recruitment. In addition, the administration of these key universities was restructured. All of the key universities defined during this stage initiated public institutions, administered by the central ministries; but in the 1980s, the number of universities affiliated with the central ministries reduced substantially and a large number of which were relegated to a co-administration between the central ministries and provincial authorities.

### The 211 Project

Higher education expansion and restructuring in the 1990s produced a large quantity of highly skilled workers and, to some extent, served the skill demands of economic development. However, the government realized the country's relatively weak performance of knowledge creation and innovation, which required overall quality improvement in its higher education sector. It was in this context that the 211 Project was implemented in 1995 by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

The 211 Project objective is developing about 100 universities and a number of key disciplines by the early 21st century, to take a leading position in the country's socioeconomic development and in international competition. This funding scheme focuses mainly on four aspects of development: dis-

ciplinary and interdisciplinary programs, digital campuses, faculty, and university infrastructure. Currently, the 211 Project is in its third phase, with 109 universities listed in the project, so far.

The 211 Project differs from the earlier initiatives of simply "listing" key universities both in their scale and by actually identifying and funding the means by which excellence in Chinese universities can best be promoted. Due to the large number of universities and research centers supported, however, the investment in each individual university has been rather limited, which has tended to reduce its institutional impact.

### The 985 Project

To further enhance the public funding for higher education, the government launched the 985 Project, in 1998. This project again reflects the government's goal and efforts to develop a tertiary education system of international stature. The Ministry of Education issued the Action Plan for Education Revitalization for the 21st Century and implemented the 985 Project to establish a number of "world-class" universities and to develop a number of key research centers of excellence. This project aims at exploring new mechanisms for higher education governance, improving universities' global competitiveness, and developing a path for building world-class universities, but with Chinese characteristics.

The 985 Project has thus far supported 39 selected universities, with financial investment from both the central and the local governments. The accompanying policy document identified 9 of the selected universities—considered the "Chinese Ivy League"—as being at the top of the list and designated to be developed into world-class universities. The remaining 30 institutions are expected to develop the slightly lower status of the existence of "international repute." More than half of the central government funding was concentrated in the top 9 universities.

Both the 211 and 985 Projects intend to build excellence in teaching and research in Chinese higher education and are stimulated by both national and institutional needs to provide a solid base, to develop the elite sector. The 985 Project has provided the participating institutions with greater autonomy in governance to improve their national and international competitiveness and to narrow the gap in academic achievement, research performance, and science innovation with their counterparts in the world.

*The 211 Project objective is developing about 100 universities and a number of key disciplines by the early 21st century, to take a leading position in the country's socioeconomic development and in international competition.*

## Impact of Developing the Elite Sector

The development of key universities since the 1950s and the implementation of the 211 and 985 Projects have had significant effects on the development of higher education in China and of higher skills. It offers opportunities for an open discussion to improve quality and explore potential routes and mechanisms to adopt in future higher education reform.

These projects have created a culture of excellence in some Chinese universities and enhanced awareness of international competition. Universities in the elite sector have played an increasingly critical role, in rejuvenating higher education as a whole and implementing socioeconomic reform in China. The overall capacity of leading universities, in terms of teaching and research, has been enhanced. A group of high-quality research centers has been built, which in turn have contributed to cutting-edge research and knowledge creation. The elite universities also act as models to nonelite universities.

This development of the elite sector, however, also raises issues and reflects weakness in the Chinese higher education system. First, the current policymaking mechanism lacks well-designed public participation. A top-down policymaking approach can save costs but may potentially neglect demands from the society, universities, and students. Second, the elite-sector development in general is managed and organized with little transparency in the process of institutional selection and evaluation and with no publicly available clear criteria and requirements.

## Reform at Peking University

Min Weifang

China's transition—from an ossified, centrally planned system to a dynamic market economy—coincided with the revolution of information technology and the rise of the knowledge-based economy. These dramatic changes provoked a series of reforms at Peking University

### From Overspecialization to More General Education

Changes in teaching and learning have been the core of reforms. Under the centrally planned economy, students were enrolled, trained, and distributed as elements of production, which was characterized by overspecialization from the beginning. Students were usually locked into a narrow field of study and had little flexibility or capacity to adapt to the technologically and economically induced changes. As the transition to

*The economic transition and the knowledge revolution changed the basic philosophy of teaching and learning.*

a dynamic market economy proceeded, the rapidly changing needs of the labor market and accelerated rates of technological renewal called for a more competitive, flexible, and adaptive labor force. Facing these challenges, Peking University took the lead in curriculum reform. In the mid-1980s, it proposed new guidelines for undergraduate teaching and learning, calling for broadening the focus of study, emphasizing a wider knowledge base through more general education.

In 2001, Peking University went further along this line, by setting up Yuanpei College, in which students study broadly in humanities, mathematics, Chinese and foreign languages, natural, and social sciences in the first two years; and beginning in the junior year, students choose a major field of study according to their interests, aptitudes, and career expectations. This special college has become more and more popular among students. Increasing numbers of prospective students apply to enter this college, each year. The graduates of the college said that this program helped them get a well-rounded education and provide a useful background to the other courses they took later, prepared them for life-long learning, and made them more flexible and adaptable to labor-market changes. Interdisciplinary studies have been encouraged: students in humanities and social sciences are required to have basic knowledge in science, mathematics, and informatics, while students in science and engineering are required to have basic knowledge of humanities and social sciences.

At Peking University, teaching and learning reforms marked a shift from emphasizing the memorization of factual knowledge to the cultivation of creative and critical thinking, problem solving, and information acquisition and generation as well as intellectual independence. The economic transition and the knowledge revolution changed the basic philosophy of teaching and learning. Reform in teaching and learning has not only encouraged students to acquire existing knowledge but also to develop the ability to explore and project what will happen in the future. Thus more heuristic and participatory methods of teaching were adopted. Young people should not be trained for short-term jobs; they should rather be assisted to learn to cope with upcoming challenges, throughout their life.

## The New Financing Patterns

The fast-growing economy, the rapid advancement of science and technology, and increased individual income place ever-greater demands for university education. The enrollment of Peking University increased from around 15,000 in the mid-1990s to about 35,000 in 2011/12 (almost 15,000 undergraduates, 12,000 master's, and 8,000 doctoral degree students). Previously, Peking University was completely financed by state appropriations. Given increasing financial pressures, regular state allocation could not meet growing needs. A new financing pattern at Peking University was gradually developed.

First, fund-raising has become one of the top priorities of university leaders. Through significant learning from international universities (mainly American universities), Peking University was one of the first in China to set up a university foundation, which has two functions—one is fund-raising and another is management of the endowment. When it started operating in 1995, the foundation had nothing but a desk. In the past 16 years, it has raised more than RMB 3 billion, built a dozen new buildings for the university, and accumulated RMB 1.6 billion in endowment. University leaders work together with the foundation staff on all the major gifts. The alumni network was strengthened for purposes of long-term resource mobilization.

*Along with economic transition, the private rate of return to university graduates has grown quickly.*

Second, a cost-sharing system has been implemented. Peking University charged students no tuition, for most of its history. It also provided free dormitory and other subsidies for students, which amounted to about 20 percent of the total recurrent expenditure. Along with economic transition, the private rate of return to university graduates has grown quickly. It is logical for individuals who benefit from university education to share part of the cost. Peking University began to charge tuition and fees in the late 1980s, as one of the strategies to address budget constraints. Current annual tuition equals about RMB 5,000, accounting for less than 20 percent of the unit cost per student. At same time, a financial-aid system was set up for students from needy families.

Third, Peking University also received a large amount of special funding from 211 Projects and 985 Projects, for upgrading to a world-class university. Peking University has been

part of a reform effort to change the structure of government spending on education.

Fourth, the university has taken advantage of its scientific and technological innovations to generate revenue by licensing patents or by spin-off companies, such as the Founder Group—the largest spin-off company in China, with a business volume of RMB 50 billion and net profit of RMB 2 billion in 2010. Peking University has also generated funds through research contracts, technical consultation to private enterprises, and providing commissioned training for industries. With the new financing strategies, the total annual cash flow of Peking University increased from less than RMB 200 million in 1995 to more than RMB 7.5 billion, in 2011.

## Emphasis on Quality Assurance

Maintaining and improving quality during the rapid expansion of enrollment has become a major concern of Peking University leaders. They stabilized the enrollment at its current size and paid more attention to quality, by first setting up quality indicators for teaching including quality of graduates—with a wide-knowledge base, critical and creative thinking, intellectual independence, problem solving and innovation capacity and skills, team-work spirit and ability, sense of social responsibility, and aesthetical and healthy, well-rounded developed people. Emphasis on research is placed on knowledge creation, breakthroughs in a new and high-tech area, high-impact factor of paper published, and think tanks for national policymaking.

Senior administrators have focused on quality inputs—such as establishing leadership for quality-assurance procedures, quality faculty, and infrastructure; quality throughputs, such as close monitoring of the teaching and research; and evaluation of quality outputs against the established quality indicators. They do believe that quality, not quantity, will make Peking University a world-class university.

## Changing Attitudes and Culture

In implementing the reforms, Peking University has run into many problems and challenges, due to both structural and psychological inertia. The existing academic structure, the faculty-knowledge structure, and the old way of teaching engendered resistance to the curriculum reform. The university had to persuade and retrain teachers, get rid of the hopeless ones, and recruit a large number of new faculty members. When implementing financial reforms, university leaders and the deans did not know how to raise funds initially. The university invited international experts to run training programs, and staff were sent to American universities, such as Stanford, to learn how to produce such a course of action.

When tuition and fees were introduced—students, parents, and the society at large felt that “this is not a socialist way.” The university faced pressure and criticism at the beginning. Even today, many people still oppose the charging of tuition. They believe that the state and university should carry the full burden of cost, as before. It was even more challenging to introduce standards of quality assurance, which first required massive faculty development programs and painful personnel reforms, especially when firing incompetent teachers. It also required updating of expensive teaching and learning equipment and facilities. More importantly, it had to embed the idea, in the mind of the teachers and students, that quality must be at the center of the university life, which was simply not the case before.

### Conclusion

The discussion above just touched a few major areas of reforms at Peking University. There are additional reforms at this university—in areas such as personnel policy and faculty development, student enrollment, job allocation, and internationalization. Along with the economic transition, all aspects of the university have been undergoing profound changes. Transformation is constant in order to fully appreciate Peking University, and today one has to assume a dynamic perspective.

## China’s Internationalization Strategy

Yang Rui

Since the final period of the Qing dynasty at the beginning of the 20th century, internationalization of higher education has been regarded as essential to China’s salvation. In the early stages, internationalization was seen as a process of attaining Western knowledge and technology, to make China strong—in the words of the Chinese intellectuals of the time, to “learn from the barbarians to ward off the barbarians.” This understanding of internationalization remained largely unchanged, until China’s recent rise to international prominence. During the past one and a half centuries, the priorities and measures of China’s internationalization have changed in accordance with the global political economy and China’s position within it. Over time, China’s education system has imitated different Western nations, for standards—initially Japan, then leaned toward the structure of the former Soviet Union, and more recently turned to Western countries. While the central purpose of learning from the technologically

*Recognizing the dominance of English, China has initiated various policies to adopt the global language instead of resisting it.*

advanced West persists, a most interesting trend in China’s internationalization strategy is to export Chinese knowledge.

### Vigorous Strategies

The most striking feature of China’s strategies for internationalization has been the initiative to engage actively with other nations. China’s embrace of English language is particularly significant. Recognizing the dominance of English, China has initiated various policies to adopt the global language instead of resisting it. Examinations in Chinese schools at all levels include English-proficiency tests. English is widely required in the promotions of academics, including many whose work requires little use of the language. Scholars and students in major universities have little difficulty in communicating with international scholars. Their English proficiency has contributed to China’s current successful interaction with the international community. Peer-reviewed papers, published by Chinese researchers, rose in a 64-fold increase over the past 30 years, with over 80 percent published in English.

### International Integration and Imitation

Internationalization in China poses various dilemmas and paradoxes, partially resulting from the tendency to imitate other countries. In China a concern exists of the potential loss of educational sovereignty, with an increase based in the expanding foreign activities in the country. This tension is reflected on the tightly centralized higher education system, with its nominal emphasis on socialist ideology. Thus, a policy requires foreign institutions to partner with Chinese institutions—with no fewer than half of the governing-body members of that institution to be Chinese citizens and the post of president (or the equivalent) to be a Chinese citizen residing in the country. This requirement has led to some ambiguity of the legal status of foreign activity. Rather than an integrated part of the higher education system, the Chinese tend to see foreign activity as a supplement to develop the national higher education system.

The dilemmas have caused contradictory decisions, as well as inefficiency. For instance, the central government aims to import the world’s most-advanced educational ideas and practices to boost the capacity of Chinese universities. How-

ever, universities leverage the prestige of an international partnership when marketing programs to local students. This ambiguity of both purpose and legal standing reveals that foreign activity has not formed the desired upgrading of the national system of higher education or attracting foreign capital to Sino-foreign-joint programs. To date, China has failed to integrate foreign activity into its national regulatory framework. Furthermore, the central government approves the forming of joint education programs, in line with the existing legal frameworks and guidelines. However, the lack of ongoing supervision has left the responsibility for quality entirely to the hands of the local teaching staff and program coordinators.

There are significant patterns as well as disparities in China's purposes and strategy for internationalization. Diverse institutions within the system similarly pursue to partner with the same countries and institutions and even in setting the same goals and mechanisms for partnerships. The same names, especially Harvard, Stanford, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, are repeatedly referenced by national flagships, such as Peking and Tsinghua University—by regional specialized institutions like the Ocean University at Qingdao in Shandong Province and by Xinjiang University, in an ethnicity area neighboring Central Asian Islamic countries.

*Considering the nation's growing global role, internationalization of higher education has an even more significant part to play.*

At the same time, differentiation among Chinese higher education institutions is increasing. China's best institutions have already integrated internationalization into their daily work and life—by teaching students from overseas, publishing in foreign languages outside China, participating in professional activities within the international community, and creating environments increasingly populated by people of various cultures and races. Yet, internationalization is hardly visible in regional institutions. As academics at major institutions are pushed to publish in English-speaking countries and collaborate with peers there, such pressure is nonexistent for their counterparts at regional institutions. A few quiet achievers, such as the institutions in Guangxi Autonomous Region and Yunnan Province, do have important collaborations and exchanges with counterparts in the Southeast Asian countries—regarding student exchange, joint programs, pre- and

in-service civil service training programs and comprehensive teaching and research collaborations.

### From Importing to More Exporting

Lately, a new form of China's internationalization is taking shape, shifting from the one-way import of foreign (Western) knowledge to a much-improved balance for introducing China to the world. Since the early 2000s, China has begun to pay more attention to exporting Chinese knowledge to the world. In 2008, students coming to China to study (223,499), for the first time, outnumbered those leaving China to study abroad (179,800). The number of foreign students in China reached 265,090, in 2010.

The country's strategies for internationalization, during this new era, are innovative in many ways. With greater prosperity, China has shifted from being an aid recipient to a donor nation. China is offering many more scholarships to attract students from overseas, targeting much of its aid to developing countries, while establishing Confucius Institutes worldwide. Meanwhile, the country emphasizes leading roles for Chinese scholars in international collaborations, focuses more carefully on the reputation of international partners, and spares no effort to mobilize the Chinese diaspora more effectively.

### Conclusion

Few decisions of the 20th century have had as profound an impact on the 21st-century world as Deng Xiaoping's announcement of an open-door policy, in 1978. Deng was prophetic and ambitious, wanting to create bridges by sending Chinese students to study overseas and encouraging Chinese universities to exchange and cooperate with their counterparts worldwide. Three decades later, China's rise is becoming increasingly clear. Considering the nation's growing global role, internationalization of higher education has an even more significant part to play. Its development in this new era requires a mixture of vision and boldness. Overall, China's strategies for internationalization have been effective and highly pragmatic, focusing heavily on initiatives with tangible and immediate results—from hardware and lab facilities to international publications and research projects. Nevertheless, there are challenges at all levels. China's eagerness for quick success often results in serious problems—such as, failing to consider different local needs or trying to transplant every iota of foreign educational policy and institutions onto Chinese soil, without a coherent and integrated plan.

## US and Chinese Partnerships and Their Dilemmas

Kathryn Mohrman

Thousands of partnerships exist between US and Chinese institutions of higher education, ranging from research agreements between two professors to branch campuses offering American degrees. Virtually every American institution is thinking about China—as a source of students, a study abroad opportunity, and a vehicle for internationalization of the home campus. This article offers several questions that academic leaders should ask about the partnerships they have and future partnerships that might arise.

### Does a China Initiative Align with an Overall Internationalization Strategy?

It is imperative to clarify your goals—for example, a plan to recruit more Chinese undergraduates as a budget-relieving strategy is quite different from the strategy to develop a joint-research program in engineering. Too often, the proposal comes from an enthusiastic individual, perhaps a faculty member pressing for an exchange agreement with his or her alma mater in China or a board member declaring: “My company is opening a plant in China so our institution needs to be there, too.” Unless both sides see a link to institutional priorities, the partnership probably should not be pursued.

### How to Get Started?

If you are not already involved in a partnership, how should it be started? Often the initiative begins with personal contacts—one of your faculty members has colleagues abroad, conversations begin at a conference, or a delegation from a Chinese university asks to visit your campus. Perhaps your hometown has a sister-city relationship with a city in China. You might read an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about a Chinese institution engaged in something closely related to your priorities and thus make a contact with them. Admissions officers at your campus participate in a college fair for prospective Chinese students. Most higher education associations in Washington have international offices able to suggest potential partners. The initial activity should link to your overall internationalization strategy, but you may need to be opportunistic in determining the specifics. Once you have identified a possibility, you should ask the following questions.

*Often the initiative begins with personal contacts—one of your faculty members has colleagues abroad, conversations begin at a conference, or a delegation from a Chinese university asks to visit your campus.*

### Are There Necessary Resources for a Long-Term Partnership?

Financial investments immediately come to mind when talking about resources, from transportation to financial aid to printing brochures in Chinese. Do you have a realistic estimate of what it might cost? Are you prepared for a multi-year commitment before seeing a significant return on your investment?

Yet, human resources are often more relevant than money. Professors and staff members born in China understand the nuances well, but are they willing to accept responsibility for a partnership? Do you have someone who can evaluate Chinese transcripts, and how will you determine if they are legitimate? Are your faculty members interested in teaching in China? Many professors jump at the chance to visit China—once—but they are not prepared to do so year after year.

The human resources on the Chinese side are equally important. Do Chinese faculty interests and strengths align well with professors on your campus? If American faculty intend to teach in China, does the target student group have sufficient language skills? When the inevitable snags occur, is there someone in a position of authority at the Chinese university to untangle things? In general, department chairs and even deans cannot make independent decisions; seemingly simple problems go up to vice presidents and even presidents. All Chinese institutions have a parallel structure of Communist Party officials that play an important role in decision making; it behooves you to know who they are in addition to the academic officials.

### What is your Policy Regarding Limited Academic Freedom and Free Access to Information in China?

The Chinese government has much tighter control over its colleges and universities than we do. Especially in the humanities and social sciences, some topics are very sensi-

tive. The government might even intervene in something as seemingly innocuous as a student journal.

On November 28, 2011, Bloomberg News published an article entitled, “China Halts U.S. College Freedom at Class Door,” outlining difficulties at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center—a long-standing program with strong guarantees on academic freedom—but only within the walls of the center. A proposed journal featuring papers written by Chinese and American students was to be widely disseminated but ran afoul of political sensitivities. Partnerships involving less prestigious universities are even more vulnerable to government sanctions on activities ranging from curriculum to movies included in the program.

Similarly, how will you deal with restrictions on Internet access, the so-called “Great Firewall of China”? It is important to be open with your partners about your expectations and then be prepared for uncertainties, on exactly where the line will be drawn.

### Are You Ready for Surprises?

Even when Chinese partners speak fluent English language, the same words do not always mean the same thing across cultures. A signed agreement is a quasi-contract to most Americans but may be considered simply a statement of aspiration to Chinese.

*Chinese accreditation procedures are still in their infancy, and critics accuse the system of serving an “old-boy network,” above enforcing recognized standards.*

There are many ways to say “no” in China, but rarely will you get a direct “no” to your question. Saving face is important, so “maybe” or “let’s talk further” or “we will consider” might simply be a way to say “no” without doing so directly. Because everything seems to need approval by someone else, good intentions by the person with whom you are speaking may not be matched by his or her superiors.

Thus, things can change, sometimes 48 hours before you intend to get on the plane and fly to Shanghai. Chinese institutions are amazingly adept at putting things together on short notice, but the last-minute nature of Chinese organizations can be difficult for many Americans.

### How Will You Assess Program Quality?

Unless professors from your own campus are teaching in China, you will be hiring local academics. Questions of equivalency can arise, especially with part-time faculty or persons educated outside of Western universities. It is vital to have the commitment of key faculty and administrators, on the home campus, who will help to assure quality standards. Chinese accreditation procedures are still in their infancy, and critics accuse the system of serving an “old-boy network,” above enforcing recognized standards.

Recruiting Chinese students raises another quality concern: the nature of prior preparation. Many families use agents to help their child apply to American universities; some are legitimate, and some are less so. Stories abound about phony letters of recommendation and even fraudulent SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) scores.

The issue of program quality applies to any kind of Chinese partnership: Is the program a credit to your institution? Will your campus be more international as a result? Too many programs run on automatic or remain within the fiefdom of a few enthusiastic individuals.

### Do You Have an Exit Strategy?

Even with the best of intentions on both sides, partnerships may need to end. Your decision may be financial, based on the number of students involved, the benefits to a global curriculum, or the dissatisfaction of a donor. A wise agreement has a fixed term, with options for renewal rather than being open ended.

### Conclusion

Chinese partnerships require patience. It often takes longer to establish a program than optimistic Americans suspect. Chinese institutions must obtain official permission, simply to host an international speaker on campus. Thus, the bureaucratic hurdles are much higher to establish a formal partnership. Recently, Michigan State withdrew from offering degree programs at its campus in Dubai, because student enrollments fell below estimates in the initial years; similar problems arise in China.

Sometimes, however, expectations go the other way. Because China is a top-down culture, even degree programs can be established very quickly, once the leaders decide to move ahead, while the American academic decision making is slower. This mismatch in procedural timetables can cause real misunderstandings about the seriousness of the American commitment.

University leadership must examine whether a China initiative is the best use of scarce resources. What are the benefits to students and faculty on the home campus? These and other questions need to be asked and discussed thoroughly before venturing into unfamiliar waters.

In summary, you need to exercise due diligence, but you also want to connect with China—a rising power and one-quarter of the world’s total population. For more suggestions, look at “International Partnerships: Guidelines for College and Universities,” published by the *American Council on Education*.

## China and the Community College Connection

Dona M. Cady

For many community colleges, the first useful step in crafting an international strategy toward China is obtaining crucial institutional support from upper administration. Whether this initial academic and fiscal buy-in occurs through mission statements, strategic planning, faculty advocacy, or with personal connections—what is key is a consistent institutional commitment.

### Building Internal Commitment and Capacity

In the case of Middlesex Community College, in Massachusetts, a visit to the East-West Center in Hawaii by the president-elect was foundational to a 22-year-continuing relationship with the Asian Studies Development Program (ASDP), a joint effort of the East-West Center and the University of Hawai’i (<http://www.eastwestcenter.org/education/asian-studies-development-program>). ASDP offers programs to two-year and four-year colleges and universities—including summer residential institutes, field seminars, and mainland workshops—and an annual academic conference. Director Peter Hershock notes that “ASDP’s model of curriculum development through faculty development has proven successful in meeting challenges that face schools committed to the more general goal of

*The importance of “bottom-up” initiatives cannot be overstated, for while administrative support may pave the way, it is the faculty who drive on it.*

building Asian studies capacity, [and] this model has proven particularly effective in simultaneously generating ‘bottom-up’ initiatives attuned to classroom and departmental realities and ‘top-down’ support sensitive to broader institutional needs and missions.”

The importance of “bottom-up” initiatives cannot be overstated, for while administrative support may pave the way, it is the faculty who drive on it. And this is what happened at Middlesex. Several faculty attended the first ASDP Summer Infusing Institute in 1991 and returned energized about China. They incorporated two- to three-week modules into their curriculum and began to spread the word in and out of the classroom. There were bumps. One early, enthusiastic faculty member traveled alone to China for a teaching exchange and found herself isolated, sleeping on a cold floor, and in desperate need of an electric blanket, which our president promptly overnighted.

### Sustaining Initiatives

With any global outreach, and not just China centered ones, institution-to-institution relations can be relatively weak in the absence of person-to-person connections. An advantage of the ASDP approach includes an emphasis on developing faculty knowledge through a summer institute, often followed the next year by a month-long field seminar; a group activity with 14–16 faculty traveling together and staying on university campuses across China, so that participants interact personally with faculty at various Chinese universities in ways that are quite open; and establishing personal connections that enable institutional ties to begin with concrete plans rather than abstract ones.

Concrete plans demand coordination—somebody’s got to do it. At Middlesex, an early adopter faculty was given release time to facilitate faculty applications for outside funding—such as ASDP, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Fulbright-Hays programs—as well as to organize Asian focused workshops and conferences. The associate provost handled international outreach and budgetary concerns—key to making that way smooth. A small cadre of faculty volunteers assisted this efficient and effective approach—all good work. However, as players retired and budgetary and international priorities shifted, the initial enthusiasm toward China waned. China was the sleeping giant; other countries were more interesting. The two-week student travel to China—a yearly trip offering three credits funded by the Middlesex Community College Foundation—gave way to other trips. Personal connections in China, fostered throughout the years, faded until several years ago, when a new generation of faculty emerged, who were interested in China. Mentored

by an early adopter, they volunteered their time to organize five workshops, one national conference, secure a spot in an ASDP Chinese Language and Culture Program and a National Endowment for the Humanities Bridging Cultures grant.

Looking at organizations, then, such as ASDP, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, and the recently launched Confucius Institute initiative of the Chinese Ministry of Education Hanban provide valuable connections to resources and exchange opportunities for faculty and students.

### Integrating the China Initiative

At any institution, but particularly at community colleges that primarily focus on first- and second-year course work, there needs to be a clear and unified programmatic strategy—not an approach solely dependent on personnel changes or silo activity by faculty. Identifying key faculty and administrators to move the global agenda forward, while supporting their work with a dedicated budget, is absolutely fundamental to programmatic success. Constant scurrying for uncertain funding saps time, resources, and faculty/student trust in programs.

*Students are the best marketing and sales force on campus when it comes to ensuring the kinds of enrollment that ultimately allow for truly sustained institutional commitment.*

In the past year, Middlesex's new strategic plan recommits to globalization and in particular, through a dedicated administrative position, to Asian Studies. The college has also approved a liberal arts and sciences Global Studies Concentration with an Asian studies (China focused) option. Because of this work, the college has recently received significant scholarship funding from a local company with China interests to underwrite Chinese-language instruction and student travel to China, including the possibility of a long-term internship program.

### Conclusion

The primary outcome, often forgotten, is the student experience. As instructors bring new and diverse perspectives into their scholarship, curriculum development, teaching and leadership, and as they build great programs that make a difference in the classroom, what happens if no one en-

rolls? While faculty and administrative efforts are key—the bottom-up and top-down dynamics—without the horizontal, peer-to-peer buzz about international studies, it is very difficult to begin giving more than lip service to internationalizing undergraduate education. Students are the best marketing and sales force on campus when it comes to ensuring the kinds of enrollment that ultimately allow for truly sustained institutional commitment. Top-down, bottom-up, and side-to-side—you will need it all.

## Planning a Physical Presence in China

Andrew Scott Conning

When many universities are considering how to structure their future engagement with China, it is useful to consider the various legal, institutional, and financial models used by foreign universities for establishing a permanent physical presence in China and the lessons their experience offers. This article discusses only permanent facilities, and excludes language and study-abroad programs hosted by Chinese universities.

### Legal Models

Foreign universities operating in China may legally incorporate themselves in three ways. A *representative office* (*daibi-aochu*) status allows a university to maintain staff in China, for the purpose of conducting unremunerated activities—such as, developing contacts, recruiting, fund-raising, and providing logistical support for study-abroad programs or faculty research. A representative office status may be used as an inexpensive method for establishing a simple liaison office, as an initial presence to expand activities. However, in 2011 the central government issued stricter regulations on the scope of activities for such offices—as well as, additional compliance requirements, including an annual reporting scheme. Moreover, capital requirements for incorporating—under the more flexible status of “wholly foreign-owned enterprise”—have declined, making the latter option preferable under most circumstances.

Wholly foreign-owned enterprise status allows a university to engage in for-profit (but nondegree) educational, training, and consulting activities and to expatriate funds. Unlike representative offices, these enterprises can sign contracts, issue invoices, and hire local employees without going through a local middleman. However, a wholly foreign-owned enterprise may only be registered as a for-profit, taxable enter-

prise, established as the university's corporate affiliate—a prospect that may not appeal to a university's board of directors. Unfortunately, it is not possible, at present, for a foreign university to establish itself as a nonprofit entity in China.

To offer formal-degree programs in China, a foreign university must establish a *joint legal entity*, with a Chinese partner institution. Any such program must be approved by the Ministry of Education and subsequently operate under the ministry's supervision. This includes annual reporting and auditing processes, as well as penalties for regulatory infractions or mismanagement. A joint legal entity is even more strictly regulated than a wholly foreign-owned enterprise, which may operate nondegree educational programs without being subject to government supervision.

### Institutional Models

In accordance with their specific priorities, foreign universities have pursued a variety of institutional models for establishing a permanent physical presence in China. The least ambitious operational model is the *liaison office*, which allows a university to conduct the activities listed above under the representative office corporate status. A somewhat more ambitious model for a physical facility in China is the *university center*, which allows an institution to engage in a broader array of activities—such as, (nondegree) executive education, training programs, and consulting (all of which require the wholly foreign-owned enterprise status). A university center may be located on a Chinese campus (as the Stanford Center at Peking University), near one or more campuses (as the University of Chicago Center and the Columbia Global Center, both located in the Haidian university district in Beijing), or in a central business district (as the Harvard Center in Shanghai). These centers are designed to accommodate study-abroad courses, host academic gatherings and training programs, support faculty research projects, promote interuniversity collaborations, and serve as a base for engagement with alumni, prospective students, and the Chinese public. By providing permanent facilities and logistical support for such activities, centers can be a more efficient and cost-effective way to coordinate a range of activities, rather than requiring separate units within the university, to make ad hoc arrangements. Like a liaison office, a center can be run as an independent entity, without the need to enter into a joint venture. If run independently, a center is relatively easy to restructure, relocate, or close—should conditions change or the venture prove unsuccessful.

Unlike liaison offices and university centers, formal degree programs must, under Chinese law, be run jointly with a Chinese institution. Among joint ventures, it is useful to dis-

tinguish between *focused joint ventures* and *full-scale joint-venture campuses*. A focused joint venture is typically or a degree program or a research institute managed in conjunction with a Chinese partner. The oldest such program is the Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies, established in 1986, which offers certificate and master's degree programs in a single discipline—International Studies. Another example of this model is the University of Michigan-Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joint Institute, established in 2005, which offers bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees in engineering. The most ambitious model of foreign university presence in China is the full-scale, joint-venture campus, offering degree programs, in a wide range of disciplines. The first two of these were the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, which opened its doors in 2004, followed soon after by Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (in Suzhou), in 2006. Two new joint-venture campuses are scheduled to begin operating in 2013: Duke Kunshan University (with Wuhan University) and New York University Shanghai (with East China Normal University). These campuses have for the most part been established—under a model, in which the foreign partner provides expertise in how to structure and administer a research university in exchange for land, facilities, and/or local administrative staffing.

### Financial Models

Although few foreign universities are looking to generate net revenue from their China operations, all aim to be financially sustainable. Revenue models include tuition fees, research commercialization, private fund-raising, executive training programs, and government funding—each of which presents its own set of challenges. Tuition fees may only be collected by universities offering degrees jointly, with a Chinese partner, and are subject to government approval. A tuition-dependent revenue model may end up far from secure, because the population of college-age Chinese will decrease in the future. Growing prosperity in China will give more students the means to go overseas for college, and competition from Chinese universities will continue to improve. In this environment, most types of educational programming will require substantial subsidies from program partners or philanthropists, although business education programs may be self-sustaining.

***Tuition fees may only be collected by universities offering degrees jointly, with a Chinese partner, and are subject to government approval.***

At the other end of the spectrum, the commercialization of research has not yet proven viable as a revenue model in the Chinese setting. Similarly, private fund-raising is still relatively weak within the People's Republic of China, and some potential donors may be seeking to buy a seat in the next freshman class. Some foreign universities have earned income through non-degree-executive education and other training programs. However, such programs are subject to heavy taxation and may not be advertised for open enrollment unless offered in partnership with a Chinese educational institution. Finally, government funding has been critical to numerous foreign university ventures in China, but funding for the construction of capital facilities has recently been curtailed. Moreover, foreign universities have had mixed results in applying for government research grants. Despite the various sources of funding mentioned above, most programs will require substantial subsidies over the short term at least.

## Conclusion

International universities have experimented with a variety of models for operating in China, in accordance with their own priorities and in response to Chinese laws that force them to operate in awkward or unaccustomed ways. Numerous institutions have established liaison offices as an initial presence, aimed at coordinating various unremunerated activities. Other universities have begun opening university centers to support a broader range of activities—including, consulting and nondegree training. To date, these have been top research universities, serving a broad range of engagement with China. Still, other universities have chosen to establish joint ventures focused on a single-degree program or research institute, while the most ambitious universities have opened or planned full-scale, joint-venture campuses, aiming to maximally expand the institution's international profile and impact.

As government funding for university expansion tightens, it will become more difficult to finance the construction of new Sino-foreign campuses. In this environment, an increasingly popular model may form the university center, allowing a foreign university to increase its engagement with China and earn revenue from nondegree educational programming, while maintaining institutional independence and flexibility.

## Applying to US Institutions: The Chinese Student Dilemma

Linda Serra Hagedorn and Zhang Yi (Leaf)

Students from China choose to study in the United States for a quality college experience, as well as a prestigious degree. While the wide variety of US colleges and universities and the assortment of majors that they offer is enticing, it may also be overwhelming to those not familiar with the country's system. Thus, many Chinese students choose to use an education agent to assist their college application process.

### Growing Reliance on Agents as Intermediaries

Also known as education consultants, education agents are third-party entities paid (either by students, foreign universities, or both) to assist students to find, apply to, and/or prepare for college overseas. In fact, the use of education agents to assist in finding a US institution fitting academic goals and personal interests is a prevalent practice for Chinese students. It is also common for students to use agents to assist in the application and visa processes.

Chinese societal changes, specifically the "one-child per family" rule, have increased the possibility that Chinese families might have the monetary resources to send their only child to US colleges. Most of the students are the first in their families to study in the United States. Just like first-generation US college students, these students lack the familial guidance and self-assurance to embark on a complicated process without additional support.

Due to the lack of understanding of the college application process in the United States—typically complicated by English-language difficulties—a large number of undergraduate and a smaller number of graduate students, often spurred by their families, choose to seek help from professional education agents. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese students have been admitted to US institutions, with the assistance of agents. Education agencies have become a booming business in China and elsewhere. As of January 2012, over 400 registered agencies were viewed in China; many of them with multiple offices in various major cities. How many agents actually operate in China is unknown.

### Ethical Concerns

The use of agents is a controversial practice that has been criticized by the US Department of State. Organizations involved in the college admissions process—such as, the National Association for College Admission Counseling,

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American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Higher Education Consultants Association, and Independent Educational Consultants Association—have issued strong statements against the use of agents. These warnings are a direct response to the reality that not all agents practice with the main ethical standards. Some agents prioritize monetary gains over students' education opportunities and thus may mislead students, cause them financial losses, and negatively impact their futures. In our past research, evidence was found of an unethical practice: students were overcharged, paid for unnecessary services, and in some cases—to insure admissions—the agents wrote false recommendation letters and forged students' personal statements.

Because they are not aware of the application process, both parents and students could easily be misled by agents, uncertain about the required criteria, and may overestimate the difficulty of the college application process. Many parents and students mistakenly assume that their visa application is more likely to be approved if they are working with an agent. They may also have difficulties understanding the contract, necessary procedures, or which services to request from the agent. Thus, in the relationship with agents, students heavily depend on the agents and have limited resources and knowledge to prevent unethical practices.

*Chinese societal changes, specifically the “one-child per family” rule, have increased the possibility that Chinese families might have the monetary resources to send their only child to US colleges.*

On the other hand, education agents who operate ethically and with the best interests of students in mind could help students in choosing a country, institution, major field, preparing college application materials, initiating contact with necessary personnel, translating documents between English and Chinese, preparing visa application materials, and even providing training for English-language tests (i.e., the Test of English as a Foreign Language or International English Language Testing System).

Typically, agencies operate through payments from the students, using their services. Typical costs may be as high as

several months of salary for a middle-class Chinese worker. In addition, many agencies also rely on commissions paid by colleges or universities, who are seeking international students. Institutional policies vary greatly and are currently under serious scrutiny. Typically, public universities have policies against paying education agents but may pay a commission, when agencies bring students to their language institutes. For the monetary gains, unethical agents may merely send students to those institutions that provide a commission—rather than researching the best opportunity and destination, after assessing a student's needs.

*Colleges and universities should not become complacent with the existence and growth of the use of education agents. However, they must realistically acknowledge that the practice is likely not going to disappear and will only strengthen, unless universities develop systems to better serve Chinese applicants.*

### US Universities Begin to Get It

This article encourages US institutions to reach out to prospective international students from China and provide them with a less-complicated, application experience. For example, institutions might consider creating welcoming and informative Web sites, in multiple languages, that clearly document the steps to admissions. While prospective students should be able to understand the information in English, their families and other mentors may not. Consider also, perhaps with the use of currently enrolled international students, answering e-mail queries in the native language of the applicant. Webinars and other local recruitment strategies may also lessen the need for prospective students to rely on external agents. Finally, we remind admissions officers to keep the EducationUSA center, sponsored by the US Department of State, informed about university programs that are seeking additional students.

Despite these targeted recruitment efforts, admissions officers and others must come to the reality that even though

their institution may not be paying commissions to agents, many of their international applicants have worked with an agent in the admissions process. Colleges and universities should not become complacent with the existence and growth of the use of education agents. However, they must realistically acknowledge that the practice is likely not going to disappear and will only strengthen, unless universities develop systems to better serve Chinese applicants.

## US Universities Serving Chinese Students: A Culture of Accountability

Tim Hathaway

Chinese students are currently the largest foreign population at American universities, and they present unique challenges to faculty and administrators. Knowledge of how they select and apply to universities and the problems for adapting can help universities integrate them more fully into campus culture. It will also aid in maintaining the high standards that compelled Chinese students to study abroad, in the first place.

### Selection and Application

This fiercely competitive domestic job market is the primary concern of Chinese students, who apply to foreign universities. According to government data, 28 percent of graduates did not find employment in 2010. Of those who did obtain jobs, many earn wages equivalent to that of migrant workers and live in urban poverty. Many applicants seek to reside abroad, permanently. Since study abroad restarted in 1978, only one-third have chosen to return.

The competitive advantage of an American education, in the Chinese job market, is largely defined by *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. Chinese employers put undue emphasis on the reputation of degree-granting institutions. They place little value on liberal arts education and soft skills developed in extracurricular activities. Chinese students, therefore, generally lack motivation to participate in a variety of activities across campus. They tend to view education as the pursuit of knowledge rather than a transformative experience. Many of these students are baffled at certain aspects of American campus life—particularly sports, such as football.

This intensely pragmatic approach to study abroad begins with the parents, who are perhaps the single-most-influential factor in the selection process. It is not uncommon for them to decide their child's undergraduate major field, even

at a foreign university. If they do not choose the major, it is usually a compromise that is often unrelated to the students' actual interests. Recruitment efforts should include parents as much as possible and educate them at the same time.

Prospective students and their parents gravitate toward agents because they lack knowledge of the application process, and most high schools do not have guidance counselors. A typical contract for an agent's services runs about \$4,000, which is equivalent to the average costs at the Independent Educational Consultants Association of the United States.

Parents who demand acceptance to highly ranked schools are a driving force, behind a proliferation of application fraud. Altering transcripts and ghostwriting personal statements are common practices. Agents or applicants may also create false e-mail accounts and forge letters out of consideration for teachers, who agree to be a reference but have neither the English-language skills nor the time to navigate online forms. Applicants are aware of the ethical concerns but may view them lightly in the absence of a culture of accountability comparable to that of Western nations.

### Adaptation

One of the greatest challenges for Chinese visiting Western countries is the diet. Some tour groups in Europe and the United States, for example, are known to patronize Chinese restaurants only. Having their own kitchen is one motivation for some students to move off campus, even if this means breaking school rules.

Learning to adapt to the norms of American classrooms, however, is an even more significant challenge. Like other east Asians, Chinese are known for excellent study habits, but they do not necessarily have superior library skills. Research from the University of California-Davis, published in *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, indicates that newly arrived Chinese students struggle with library services, due to inadequate English and unfamiliarity with the organizational culture of American libraries—including the Library of Congress Classification system.

Chinese academia is notorious for cheating and plagiarism, but this may be more a reflection of the character of the education system, rather than the character of individuals. Chinese teachers are reluctant to punish cheaters in light of the enormous pressure of constant high-stakes testing. Also, the majority of plagiarism in Chinese schools may be based on the fact that students simply do not understand this phenomenon. Quoting or copying without attribution is the norm in Asian education and journalism. A one-semester, advanced English as a second language course in basic research and

academic writing can remedy many fundamental problems, including learning how to write without plagiarism.

Chinese students also have difficulty adapting to relationships with instructors, who view themselves primarily as facilitator of learning, rather than authoritative source of knowledge. A 2006 article, in *Canadian and International Education*, on Chinese graduate students coping strategies in North American universities found that this is a persistent challenge, even after many years, as well as critical thinking. Critically analyzing a text or even an instructor's argument is a counterintuitive learning strategy for students.

Faculty may be tempted to accept less classroom participation from Chinese students who tend to be reticent. But contrary to common belief, Chinese students can and do engage in dynamic discussions in the classroom, albeit much less frequently than Americans. They feel comfortable exchanging ideas freely when they are in small groups and slightly removed from the professor's monitoring of the information or opinions they discuss. Other effective methods are for the professor to keep track of participation and call on students directly. Similarly, universities that propose to increase Chinese students' integration in campus life should not rule out a top-down approach, such as requiring participation in extracurricular activities.

Universities need to comprehend the temptations Chinese face too. Stealing sensitive information or planting software bugs may be a way to gain an advantage in securing employ-

ment back home. A recent report to Congress, from the Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive, warns that Chinese individuals and organizations are "the world's most active and persistent perpetrators of economic espionage." Chinese students may be motivated by an acute sense of historical wrongdoing on the part of Western nations. They also tend to distrust American institutions, notably government, and the notion that the United States actively seeks to keep China down is widely accepted by many in China.

## Conclusion

Administrators and faculty need to understand the attendant cultural influences on the process of selection, application, and adaptation to US universities for Chinese students.

This understanding is critical for addressing application fraud, which is likely to continue at high levels until the process is tailored to local Chinese conditions and more resources in US admissions offices and elsewhere are devoted to detecting fraudulent credentials. It is also important for addressing issues in the classroom, which may be resolved with advanced English as a second language training in academic writing, research, and critical thinking. In other words, the most important way US universities can serve Chinese students is to focus on maintaining a culture of accountability, as they learn to adapt to each other.

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