

## SARS update

- Beijing's primary and high schools, initially scheduled to re-open on May 07, will remain shut until May 19. Higher-Edge in Beijing reports that the Government has been making provisions for its students, calling on teachers to be available for instruction by Internet and telephone.

Source: [http://www.goasiapacific.com/news/GoAsiaPacificBNA\\_846918.htm](http://www.goasiapacific.com/news/GoAsiaPacificBNA_846918.htm)

- Internet cafes, along with libraries and museums, have been ordered to shut down by the Beijing Municipal Government. Hoping to limit the spread of SARS, authorities have closed "net bars," which are a daily feature in the lives of local Chinese, including university students.

Source: <http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,110479,00.asp>

- Hong Kong's and Singapore's primary and secondary students have been back in school for approximately three weeks now. The school year may be extended into the summer break as a result of the missed work.

Sources: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/eastasia/view/38901/1.html> and <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/38174/1.html>

- Philippine Senate President Franklin Drilon is proposing that the nation's school year be pushed from September to June, instead of June to March, this year. Drilon is responding to similar school closures in Hong Kong and Singapore in the effort to prevent a potential outbreak of SARS. The decision has been deferred to the SARS Crisis Management Committee, and a final evaluation is pending.

Source: <http://www.newsflash.org/2003/04/hl/hl017900.htm>

- IDP Education Australia and the British Council have cancelled all International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exams scheduled for May in China.

Source: [http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5744,6357500%25E12333,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,6357500%25E12333,00.html)

- This year's "China MBA Development Forum," to be held in Shanghai from May 17 to 18, has been cancelled due to fears surrounding SARS. Higher-Edge in Shanghai reports that the Management School of Shanghai Jiaotong University, the event venue, has posted a notice regarding the cancellation.

News release: [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200304/20/eng20030420\\_115473.shtml](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200304/20/eng20030420_115473.shtml) •

## GRAD(ually) tackling fraud?

While academic misrepresentations and visa fraud continues to be a growing problem, at last week's National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP) Annual Conference there was little will or commitment to tackle these serious concerns to academic integrity and security.

A common sentiment encountered in the many candid conversations at the Higher-Edge booth at NAGAP, was the laxity with which the issue of misrepresentations by graduate student applicants was encountered, if not at the individual level, then at the institutional level.

Discourse on this subject at the New Orleans hosted conference, typically acknowledged that institutions needed to better protect themselves from misrepresentations, but that the commitment remained weak. While this weakness has deep roots, institutions are slowly but surely being prodded into awakening to the need to do more than they have done traditionally to minimize abuses of their graduate (as well as undergraduate) enrollment systems.

Along with the greater rigour impelled by the institution of SEVIS controls across the country, it appears the FBI is now also more active in asserting itself in this arena as reported in this week's The Chronicle ("Cracking Down on Visa Fraud"). The U.S. government is zealously searching for fake documents and other illegal activities on college campuses. See <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v49> •

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