

THE PLAYING FIELD

Higher-Edge's Questions For Colloquy Live

Colloquy Live, an online discussion forum at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, will be tackling the issue of "Visa Security and the Drop in Foreign Applications to U.S. Colleges" Thursday March 11, at 1:00pm.

Higher-Edge will be asking the following questions:

Have there actually been larger numbers of visa refusals? Or is it just a "perception" among foreign students that visas are hard to come by and that the U.S. is not welcoming them?

Do U.S. schools have any resentment of what seems to be the capitalization by the U.K. on this opportunity to take students away from the U.S.?

Would verification of international students before the application process make issuance of visas easier or faster?

Would a change in U.S. administration/views immediately bring everyone back? Or will this impression people have have long lasting effects?

Higher-Edge encourages its readers to participate in tomorrow's Colloquy Live: <http://chronicle.com/colloquylive/>

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Inti's Expansion

Inti International Group of Colleges, already with five campuses in Malaysia and international branches in China, Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong, continues to stretch itself internationally in the global market. It is offering training courses, particularly to lecturers to ensure they have sufficient overseas exposure and are internationally qualified.

According to Inti CEO, Tan Yew Sing, the group was also focusing on its franchise programs by heading overseas with its expertise, intellectual property, and staff and management services. He added the group is planning to introduce a hospitality management program, nursing program and mass communications program this year.

For more information on EI-Asia, e-mail Nick Yeo: nick@higher-edge.com

Source: EI-Asia, December-January 2004.

OVER THE COUNTER

IELTS In China

In *Not-So-Foreign 3.05*, we gave details on the new format of TOEFL examinations. Beryl Meiron, Director of the North American branch of the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS), told Higher-Edge that their test "has always tested all 4 skills [reading, writing, speaking and listening], and has adopted a communicative, task-based approach to testing in the University of Cambridge tradition."

According to Meiron, over 85,000 candidates in China took IELTS in 2003, while the projected numbers for 2004 are over 100,000. With tests scheduled three times a month, in as many as 14 cities, the flexibility afforded to Chinese test takers may contribute to this expected growth. This alternative test is already gaining recognition in American universities, where traditionally the TOEFL was used to gauge international applicant's English. Among those institutions are Duke (who's website states "the IELTS is the preferred English proficiency test" for graduate admissions), Princeton and Northwestern.

To see the full list of institutions that accept IELTS, visit: <http://www.ielts.org/recognition.cfm>.

GLOBE TIPPING

Southeast Asian Budget Airline

A new budget airline based out of Singapore may soon make the island-state a regional hub for travelers looking for inexpensive travel options. Valuair has already announced plans to fly to Hong Kong, Jakarta and Bangkok by May, and looks to expand its routes to include India, China and Australia. Airfare is expected to be 40 to 50 percent cheaper than other budget carriers in the region (which include Tiger Airways and AirAsia), while offering basic amenities.

Higher-Edge will be participating in the following conferences this year

AACRAO Annual Conference
Las Vegas, NV : April 19-22
Booth #530

NAFSA Annual Conference
Baltimore, MD : May 23-28
Booth #436